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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: IRAQI GOVERNMENT, CONSTITUTION, TAL AFAR; BAGHDAD

SUMMARY: Discussion on the Constitution and Terrorism were the major editorial themes of the daily newspapers on September 13, 2005. END SUMMARY.

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SELECTED COMMENTARIES

[IA. "Terrorism's Sources"](#)
(Al-Adala, no bias, affiliated with SCIRI led by Abdul Aziz Al-Hakim, published this page-three editorial by Dr. Ali Khalif)

"There is no doubt that terrorism emanates from different sources, some of which are material and other immaterial. Terrorists are trying to spread their ideologies throughout the world by manipulating emotions and beliefs. At times they take advantage of unique situations in countries, such as Iraq, to attract simplistic minds, luring them into terrorism.

"Iraqis however have seen through these types of ideologies and we are calling on them to fight the internal and external sources of terrorism. The Iraqi Minister of Defense demonstrated that Tel Afar was a haven for terrorists and their weapons caches. There is no doubt that there are many internal sources for terrorism that we must eradicate because they are inter-related with external terrorist groups and we must ensure that we eliminate terrorist hotspots to prevent terrorists from slipping away and hiding in other cities as has occurred before. The problem is that we have to deal with those who support and provide refuge for terrorists because they are the real danger. It is unreasonable to expect that foreign terrorists who come to Iraq can conduct operations without an incubator or local cover. All of us need to fight terrorist ideologies and those who incite terrorism."

[IB. "Humanitarian Visit"](#)
(Al-Bayyan, affiliated with the Al-Dawa party led by the PM Al-Ja'afari, published this unattributed editorial about the Prime Minister's visit to Tal Afar)

"The visit of Prime Minister Al-Ja'afari to Tal Afar indicates his determination to stabilize security and peace in the city and its environs. His visit comes directly after the wide-scale military campaign that was conducted, jointly by the heroes of our Iraqi armed forces in the Ministries of Defense and Interior, to eradicate terrorist activities in Tal Afar. This campaign was designed to restore stability and security to frightened citizens who have suffered from terrorist acts for more than three months.

"The government has worked hard to solve the problem peacefully by asking for help from tribal leaders and city residents, and holding negotiations before deciding to implement a plan to cleanse terrorists from the city. This visit indicates that Al-Ja'afari cares about his people and demonstrates the humanitarian face of the relationship between the leader and his people. Terrorists exploited the location of the border town of Tal Afar to bring murderers and suicide bombers into the city to commit genocide against its residents. Terrorists wanted to sow sectarianism and foment disunity among the Iraqi people in Tal Afar. But, today, they have been defeated by the Iraqi people and the courage and intelligence of Iraq's leadership."

[IC. "The Marginalization of Culture in the Draft Constitution"](#)
(Al-Mashriq, independent, anti coalition, published this page-ten editorial by Abdul Jabbar Al-Samara'ee)

"We had hoped that the constitution drafters would have paid more attention to culture but unfortunately we are

disappointed because we haven't found anything in the constitution that mentions or considers culture. It seems as if Iraq lacks culture and hasn't been the cradle of civilization several thousand years ago. However, we suggest that the draft constitution forbid government restrictions on culture. In addition, we must not be subject to foreign culture--we must depend on our own indigenous Islamic and Arab culture. We must also prevent any attempt to impose any foreign language on our country. We have to prevent regional dialects from being used in the arts and on television series because dialects weaken the essence of the Arabic language which consequently will lead to a deterioration of our Arab identity.

"It is necessary for civil society organizations to be responsible for promoting culture, preserving our heritage, and maintaining the distinctness of Iraqi society. The government must not disseminate or encourage sectarian, denominational, or ethnic segregation of culture; all educational curricula must be reviewed to ensure this. We must be open to developed countries and cultures. I think the new Iraqi constitution must call for strengthening culture in order to make the country stronger. Iraqi people must be equipped with culture so that they can defeat its misappropriation by terrorists. In the end, we want to preserve the morals of our culture because if a nation loses its morals then it will lose its identity."

¶D. "The Constitution and the Referendum"
(Al-Sabah, independent, published this page 25 editorial by Adnan Sher Khan)

"It is rare that political groups achieve all of their demands in democratic systems of governance. Dictatorial regimes, on the other hand, install the dictator as guardian of the people, one who enacts legislation that suits him and forces people to obey his orders. Multiculturalism in a country like Iraq makes it impossible to reach a consensus that can satisfy every group. Some groups objected to the draft constitution because it didn't contain certain issues they felt were necessary to include in the constitution.

"President Talabani said that the constitution's articles can be amended in the future and that everything can be changed except for the holy Qu'ran. We understand that the Iraqi people have a right to peacefully demonstrate and express themselves publicly therefore those who want to reject the constitution must use their democratic rights to do so. With a two-thirds vote in three provinces, voters can reject the constitution as permitted under the TAL. However, we do not understand why some of those who want to reject the constitution hoisted Saddam's picture in their demonstrations.

"There have even been some threats from these groups who claim they will burn the land if the constitution is ratified. It seems that there are still some people who have dictatorial thoughts. Nevertheless, the Independent Electoral Commission has set October 15 as a date for the referendum. Therefore, we have to quickly reach an agreement on the draft constitution so that the United Nations can print millions of copies and distribute them with ration cards. We must also begin a national campaign to educate people about the articles of the constitution. If we continue to have major disputes about the constitution Iraqi citizens will not benefit from it; we hope that national media outlets, civil society organizations and political parties will take responsibility for educating citizens about the constitution."

SATTERFIELD